

### Domestic Violence Board - 19th September 2006

### PROGRESS REPORT TO THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BOARD

### Report by Croydon Borough on behalf of the Commissioner

#### Summary

This progress report seeks to address the outstanding issues and actions given to the borough to progress at the meeting of the MPA Domestic Violence Board held on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006. The report details any progress made as well as the planned work to be undertaken by the BOCU to address these outstanding issues. The report also seeks to request further assistance from TP Crime Directorate or the MPA Domestic Violence Board to progress actions where the BOCU feels this is needed.

#### 1. EQUALITIES MONITORING

### (a) How does data broken down according to ethnicity, age and gender shape services locally?

(For example, Croydon's data on victims disaggregated according to ethnicity showed that those victims where their data was recorded as 'unknown' totalled higher than records for all 16 ethnicity specific categories added together – the Board's concern was that without this knowledge, how does the organisation shape locally responsive services? This particular issue is MPS-wide but it is important that the BOCU uses this information and looks at work to capture accurate data.)

We note the comment about the data provided in support of our original submission to the Domestic Violence Board in April this year. A central MPS analytical unit provided this data and we failed to identify and highlight the inconsistencies within the presentation of the data.

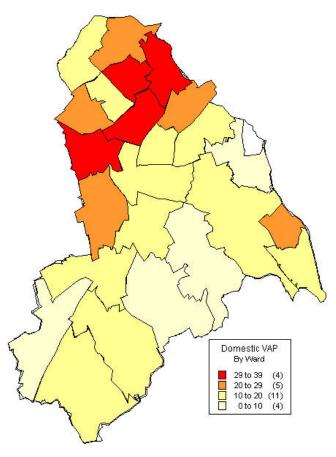
More recently Croydon Borough, with the support of its local Higher Analyst, produced its own bespoke Domestic Violence problem profile (in support of planning for a Home Office led Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign [DVEC]) in which ethnicity recorded as 'unknown' has only been recorded in a very small number of cases -0.5% (37 cases out of 6917 - see table 1).

### **Table 1: Victim Ethnicity**

Not recorded 45 Afro-Caribbean 2129 Arabian/Egyptian 25

<b>Grand Total</b>	6917
White European	3852
Unknown	37
Oriental	36
Declined/Refused	21
Dark European	240
Asian	532

<u>Please note:</u> The victim total of 6917 is higher than the total number of crime reports as some incidents may have more than one victim, e.g. mother and child.



The highest group is white European followed by Afro-Caribbean and this reflects in the population breakdown of Croydon Borough. Figures from local council demographics show 20% of Croydon's residential population come from black and minority ethnic communities, 13% disabled and 18% over 60. It should be noted that the figures indicate that 55.7% of victims recorded as being European and whilst this appears to differ from the borough demographics the 'hotspot' wards for domestic violence (see 'hotspot map') show that Thornton Heath, South Norwood, Selhurst and Broad Green feature very clearly and the demographics for the north of the borough show a much greater proportion of minority ethnic communities.

### Hotspot Map for offences involving Domestic Violence - Domestic Violence Against the Person (VAP) by Ward:

Broad Green – 39 (8.9%) Thornton Heath – 37 (8.5%) Selhurst – 38 (8.7%) South Norwood – 29 (6.6%)

The problem profile also extended to Gender (see table 2) and this confirmed that 75% of victims are female (the commentary regarding the number of victims against overall crimes is relevant in this case because of multiple victims with children being included).

**Table 2: Victim Gender** 

Not recorded 41

Female	5174
Male	1701
Unknown	1
Grand Total	6917

### (b) Is there any data available in relation to sexual orientation, disability and religion and how does this shape services locally?

### Religion

The religion of victims is not routinely recorded – it is not a mandatory reporting field within the crime reporting system (CRIS); of the 4944 victims of domestic violence (CRIS reports with a DV flag) between 01/04/2005 and 26/07/2006, only 26 stated the religion of the victim:

Christian	12
Roman Catholic	4
Hindu	4
Islam	3
Buddhist	1
Sikh	1
Jehovah's witness	1

As can be seen from the above figures the recording of stated religion is rarely completed.

### **Disability**

The same can be said for disability, again there is a CRIS field but of the 4944 victim reports only 64 indicated some form of disability:

Ability to lift carry or move	2
Disfigurement	1
Eyesight	1
Hearing	4
Learning and understanding	4
Memory	3
Mobility	16
Psychiatric/mental disorder	10
Serious Illness	8
Other	15

There is an additional problem regarding the accurate recording of a disability in that one can only record on CRIS one form of disability; for example if a person is deaf and blind only one of these can be entered on CRIS.

#### Sexual orientation

The sexual orientation of victims is not recorded on CRIS as a matter of course; there is no field to enter such data so it can't be captured. However, the concept of violence between same sex couples is not a new one for the police and associated agencies.

Victim's who reports such allegations are provided with appropriate support in addition to the services of the family justice centre, via the borough LGBT officers; borough homophobic crime forum (Aurora group) where appropriate; and can be and are referred to other relevant support agencies such as Broken Rainbow.

#### Conclusion

Croydon is well aware that DV cuts across all ethnicity, age and gender groups, which is clearly reflected in the figures above. We therefore ensure that the CSU has access to, via FJC partners, the necessary specific on site support agencies and these support agencies are able to provide a service tailored to the specific needs of the particular victim.

It is intended to update the Domestic Violence problem profile on a regular basis, and to use data collected from the Family Justice Centre to ensure that our service provision continues to meet the needs of our diverse community. The breadth of these services has already been covered in great depth in Croydon's initial report to the board under the heading Equality and Diversity Implications so will not be duplicated here.

### 2. MPS INTERNAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

### (a) How the policy is implemented within Croydon BOCU?

There is currently no specific MPS policy relating to victims of domestic violence who are met police employees. The Violent Crime Directorate is currently writing this guidance.

There are standard operating procedures (SOP's) relating to suspects who are MPS employees (both officers and police staff). This borough fully embraces those procedures and we are very clear in passing the message that Domestic Violence is not tolerated in any circumstances. Officers and police staff who are perpetrators are dealt with by normal criminal process, and where appropriate, subsequent disciplinary proceedings. These SOP's give some guidance for the treatment and support of MPS employees who are victim and this is outlined below.

### (b) What support is offered to police staff and officers who are victims of domestic violence?

From Standard Operating procedures/guidelines:

### Support and referral

There are opportunities for MPS officers/employees to seek help at an early stage where problems relating to partner or family relationships emerge that cause the officer/employee concern. Colleagues must not act as 'mediators' in domestic incidents.

Occupational health is able to provide advice and support in this capacity. Staff must be aware that officers/employees disclosing domestic violence or sexual offences will not be entitled to confidentiality. This, of course, is in contrast to staff disclosing that they are victims of these type of offences, they will be dealt with in confidence at all times and their consent will be required to share information.

For officers/employees wishing to seek help outside of the Service, there are several specialist support groups available. (Full list provided in guidelines.)

### Victim safety and confidentiality

The safety of the victim and their children **will be paramount.** There may be additional barriers to reporting for partners of police officers/employees and further pressures for victims who are police employees; this must be borne in mind when considering safety measures. Be mindful of the ability for easy access to records and databases relating to domestic incidents, rape or sexual offences and take steps to restrict, sanitise or otherwise ensure confidentiality for the victim, disclosure or information sharing will only be conducted with the full knowledge and consent of the victim. (Guidance relating to MPS employees as victims of these offences will be issued separately).

Every opportunity is taken to 'advertise' the role of the Community Safety Unit and to encourage staff to report incidents of domestic violence within their own private lives. These opportunities include Training Days and the proposed input to staff regarding the services offered by the Family Justice Centre.

## (c) Is the CSU Manager or Borough Commander aware of any feedback in relation to the BOCU's response to police staff and officers who are survivors of domestic violence?

The CSU Manager, DI Robins is personally aware of staff members who have had both CSU and FJC support. Some individuals have referred themselves directly to the advocacy services or solicitors available within the FJC without wishing to report criminal allegations and feedback from all agencies/victims has been positive.

### (d) What training and awareness is provided to all levels of police staff and officers in relation to the internal policy?

There is no training currently taking place in relation to the Service Internal Policy over DV matters. This will be re-visited when the MPS policy/guidance has been completed, however I would reiterate that ongoing training and awareness of the role of the Community Safety Unit within the Family Justice Centre will continue to emphasis that the facilities and support are available for ALL victims of domestic violence.

# (e) Does the CSU Manager feel that police staff or officers are confident to report their experiences to the BOCU or is a civil remedy preferred? If there is a lack of confidence, why does the CSU manager think this is the case? What changes could be made to restore staff confidence?

Yes, police staff and police officers have both had CSU and FJC support. Some victims have also chosen to self refer direct to other FJC partners, such as solicitors and DV advocates for advice and help.

No information has been received from any victim or FCJ agency to suggest there is a lack of confidence for victims to come forward.

Civil remedies will always be considered and offered to DV victims, as one of a variety of solutions the FJC can offer in order to break the cycle of DV. This can be instead of or in addition to a criminal prosecution, but will largely depend on the wishes of the individual victim, and their own particular circumstances.

There are no current indications that there is a lack of confidence within support services, indeed all staff who have had the opportunity to become involved in the process have been complimentary about the facilities.

### (f) How are police staff and officers who are perpetrators of domestic violence held accountable for their behaviour within the BOCU?

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has a clear policy relating to the Investigation of Domestic Violence incidents, which aims to stop the violence whilst protecting victims and their children and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions through the Criminal Justice System. Similarly, policy covering the investigation of rape and sexual offences gives clear guidance to investigators when dealing with offences.

The Standard Operating procedures for Domestic Violence and the Investigation of Rape and Sexual Offences will be applied in all cases where MPS personnel involved in domestic incidents, rape or serious sexual offences come to the attention of the service, which will include the positive action policy, risk assessment and management, effective evidence gathering and recording of appropriate information and intelligence e.g. form 124D, CRIS, CRIMINT, MERLIN.

In addition, these standard operating procedures will be followed when an MPS employee is involved as a suspect in domestic violence incidents, rape or serious sexual offences:

Police employees who commit domestic violence, rape or serious sexual offences will not be seen or treated as different from any other perpetrator and will be investigated and held accountable through the Criminal Justice System in the same way as any other person.

The Police Code of Conduct in Section 1 provides "It is of paramount importance that the public has faith in the honesty and integrity of police officers".

#### 3. TRAINING ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### (a) What domestic violence training do police staff and officers receive at all levels, whether front-line staff or senior management within the borough?

All police officers up to the rank of Inspector have received a mandatory training day in relation to DV matters. This training also includes PCSOs and station reception officers. The agenda for the day includes a broad overview of domestic violence and the impact on victims, MPS policies and procedures (including the use of Book 124d and positive action policy), and input from a DV advocate representative.

The Community Safety Unit also offer attachments to staff in order to give them a greater understanding of the secondary phase of the investigation process once an initial allegation has been made and positive action taken.

### (b) What training do staff and officers receive before arriving on the borough? Is on-going training provided?

Probationary constables receive DV training at Training School prior to arriving at the Borough. Probationers arriving on Borough also receive DV training whilst on their 10

week Street Duties Course. This consists of the 1-day training given to all front line staff and is to ensure that probationers are satisfactorily trained in relation to Service policy around DV matters and to raise awareness of DV issues. PC242ZD Islam, a qualified Trainer, assisted by a representative from the DV advocacy service, delivers the training.

Ongoing training is provided and this is included in the next round of training diarised for the period September 2006 to December 2006. This will involve further training around 124D completion and a tour of the Community Safety Unit and Family Justice Centre and this will assist officers when dealing with victims of domestic violence and enable victims to give informed consideration to appropriate methods of breaking the cycle of violence. This will be provided to all front line staff. This is part of the continual Service Improvement drive instigated by Ch Supt Gore and was as a result of the Domestic Violence Process Mapping Problem Solving Initiative.

Officers transferring to the Borough have their Personnel Record checked to confirm whether they have received the Mandatory DV Training and when appropriate we will run extra training days to train these officers and keep them informed regarding services available within Croydon Borough for victims of domestic violence.

(c) Can a brief overview of the training be provided? What areas/issues are covered? Who provides the training? How long does the training take to complete? What follow-up training is provided to build on and update information for staff and officers?

### **Overview of the Training Day**

The Aim of the Training Day is to improve the quality of service to victims of domestic abuse/violence.

This is achieved by raising awareness of domestic violence issues through class discussion. Input from trainer in relation to expected standards of initial investigation evidence gathering and reporting of domestic violence.

Explanation of and application of the MPS definition of DV

Explanation behind the introduction of the Reporting Booklet 124D and instruction in its correct completion.

A member of CDVAS explains their role when dealing with victims and what services they provide to support the victims of domestic violence.

To get students to identify reasons why the training is required "Why are we here?" get students response and discussion along with CDVAS.

To stimulate class participation through discussion by the use of high impact video films e.g. "Worst kept secret", video of same sex relationship and a video on forced marriages "Narinas".

Also by the use of <u>TRUE/FALSE</u> handout to students. This consists of questions relating to misconceptions around Domestic Violence, its occurrence across all classes and cultures and the frequency of its occurrence.

The training is delivered by Croydon Police training unit and makes use of local advocates to give a non-Service perspective.

Follow-up training is delivered through the Borough Training cycle and the quality assurance process managed by DI Robins and DCI Stockford means that individual errors/failings are identified at the earliest opportunity. The Borough activity in relation to domestic violence is reviewed on a daily basis and identified areas of good practice and poor performance are discussed at the Daily Management Meeting that is chaired by the Borough Commander. Line managers for initial investigating officers are held to account through this process. One to one feedback is given to individuals where appropriate and officers are invited for a short attachment to the Community Safety Unit to ensure that they fully understand the importance of the work and impact that 'getting it right first time' can have on victim confidence.

### (d) What training do CSU staff and officers specifically have/need?

All CSU officers have had the training as described above, i.e. probationer training and one day DV training with advocate facilitator.

In addition, the CSU DI provides training days for CSU staff only, where specific areas of DV are covered in depth, these include; forced marriage, secondary risk assessment training, civil injunctions and family law, bad character evidence and independent prosecutions (from CPS.)

The MPS Crime Academy provides 3-week courses for CSU constables and sergeants. Croydon CSU has staff that have already been trained and more are to follow.

### 4. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE CIVIL AND CRIMINAL OUTCOMES

There was a concern among some members of the DVB that there appeared to be an 'over-reliance' on the civil court system by Croydon BOCU. Therefore DVB members felt that in addition to supporting the work in relation to the civil system, there needed to be a greater understanding of where improvements could be made to build robust cases which where possible can rely on sources of evidence independent of the victim.

Croydon Police and FJC partner agencies recognise the positive impact the Civil Courts can have in providing a fast and effective solution for some victims, in breaking the cycle of domestic violence and providing long term safety. Many victims choose this particular route, which is enhanced in Croydon, as the victims have direct access to solicitors within the FJC. We do not feel that we are over-reliant on this particular solution, and the high numbers of injunctions that the court issues are only indicative of the very proactive and supportive Civil Court and judges. Many of these are driven by 'self-referral' of victims to the FJC rather than via the Community Safety Unit. In such cases information is exchanged at the weekly CSU/FJC Operations meeting to ensure that police have an accurate intelligence picture for domestic violence and where appropriate can take proactive action to target the offender for other matters of criminality.

Police will always seek to prosecute offenders where the necessary evidence exists, and independent prosecutions are requested of the CPS wherever such evidence exists. We recognise that in serious and high risk cases it is necessary to proceed through the criminal courts without the consent of the victim as we have a duty to protect lives.

Every domestic violence report is monitored daily to ensure positive action is taken by the initial investigating officers, and that the quality of evidence recorded reaches the required standards to maximise every detection opportunity. Investigators within the Community Safety Unit all have personal objectives set as part of their Performance Development Review and supervisors/line managers are held to account for sanctioned detection targets.

It is worth noting that Croydon Borough's sanctioned detection rate since April 1st 2006 is currently at 27.3% (compared to 18.6% for the same period last year) and that this is a continuing trend of improvement. It should also be noted that sources from Government Office for London and the Home Office support the concept of successful outcomes as a potentially more effective measure for success in the area of domestic violence rather than sanctioned detections as a sole guide. We recognise that there is the need for an ongoing academic debate in this area and will continue to seek to improve sanctioned detection rates and reduce repeat offending by providing an holistic approach to victims.

### 5. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF REPEAT VICTIMISATION DATA AND HOW THIS IS INFORMING THE BOCU

The definition of a repeat victim under current MPS guidelines is "where there are 2 or more reported incidents for the same victim within a 12 months period".

Additional analysis has been carried out by Croydon borough regarding repeat victimisation. This is outlined below for the board's information.

Of the 4944 victims of domestic violence 528 (11%) of these had been a repeat victim between 01/04/2005 and 26/07/2006 the breakdown being as follows:

Victim of 2 offences	359
Victim of 3 offences	107
Victim of 4 offences	32
Victim of 5 offences	10
Victim of 6 offences	13
Victim of 7 offences	3
Victim of 8 offences	2
Victim of 9 offences	1
Victim of 10 offences	1

As can be seen majority of the repeat victims, 68% had been the victim of one other offence (total 2).

There is a dedicated CSU officer who monitors and reviews the victims on the high-risk list, to ensure ongoing risk assessment and safety plans are put in place. These safety plans include; referral to The Sanctuary Project, which is run in conjunction with Croydon council and offers enhanced physical safety for victims by measures such as installation of alarms, or changing locks; target hardening of domestic premises to prevent victims having to move unnecessarily from their home; and the provision of Careline Alarms as reassurance and to give an early alert of potential attack. The CSU continue to be victim focussed whilst concentrating on investigative opportunities to reduce repeat victimisation. Additional support is offered through Partner agencies within the FJC.

We do not concentrate solely on repeat victims, recent examples of targeting repeat offenders include arrest activity in support of Operation Athena days of action and participation in 2 Home Office led 'Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaigns' (DVEC).

Recent analysis has been undertaken to identify potential repeat offenders for potential 'disruption' activity. This revealed a number of offenders who had come to the attention of police for 3 offences of domestic violence. This intelligence was included as part of the DVEC campaign but the lack of surrounding intelligence means that 'disruption' is not currently a proportional tactic against these individuals. This will be kept under review. The CSU has been tasked with taking potential activity from cases arising out of the MAPPA arrangements for 'category 2' offenders – potentially dangerous offenders, and this is managed through the MAPPA process.

### 6. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF WHAT IS 'OTHER ACCEPTED CRIME'

Of the 7650 classified offences (including sub classifications) with a DV flag the breakdown by offence type is as follows:

Violence Against the Person	43% (3300)
Other Accepted Crime	43% (3293)
Criminal Damage	8.6% (658)
Theft and Handling	2% (155)
Other Notifiable Offences	1% (73)
Burglary	0.7% (54)
Unknown	0.6 (44)
Sexual Offences	0.5% (41)
Robbery	0.3% (20)
Fraud or Forgery	0.2% (12)

The greatest categories by far are 'Violence against the person', and 'Other accepted crime'.

### **Violence Against the Person**

43% of Violence Against the Person offences constitute ABH (Actual Bodily Harm). This is followed by 37% of classifications Common Assault (see table 3).

### **Table 3: Violence against the Person**

Abduction of a Child by Parent	3
ABH – Actual Bodily Harm	1419
Assault On Constable	1
Assaults - Others	1
Assault W/I to Resist Arrest	1
Attempted Murder	2
Breach of a Restraining Order	10
Breach of Harassment Injunction	22
Common Assault	1212
Cruelty/Neglect of Children	3

12
39
330
1
101
1
5
2
19
18
69
20
1
2
4
2

### **Other Accepted Crime**

The highest offence by far is Domestic Incident constituting 94% of `Other Accepted Crime` (see table 4).

There is a robust policy to ensure that the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) are met and that when no criminal offence has been committed the matter is recorded as a 'Domestic Incident' in accordance with MPS policy. Every allegation with a 'DV' flag on CRIS is scrutinised to ensure that allegations of assault are not missed. There is direct supervision of this process by the CSU manager DI Robins and the Crime Manager, DCI Stockford. Use of the classification 'Domestic Incident' ensures that an accurate intelligence picture is maintained and that proactive intervention is made after a risk assessment has been conducted.

**Table 4: Other Accepted Crime** 

Communications Act Offences	107
Criminal Law Act 1977, Sec.6	5
Cruelty to Animals	1
Domestic Incident	3085
Drunk in Charge of Child under 7	1
Fail Comply Breach of Condition	1
Other Crime or Record Only Entry	1
Racial Incident	2
Send letters etc. cause distress	7
Telecommunications Act Offences	82
Wireless Telegraphy Offences	1

#### 7. ROLE OF SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS IN THE LOCAL RESPONSE

In accordance with current MPS instructions Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT's) are not directly involved in the investigation of domestic violence (other than as initial investigating officers if matters are reported to them in the street). Support to victims of DV comes from officers within the CSU and FJC. The issues of direct engagement by SN Teams in this area of policing is outlined in the following short report compiled by Inspector Jacqui Nicholas, OIC for 'Croydon Central' SNT:

### Role of Safer Neighbourhood Teams in the local response.

- The current position at Croydon is that SNT do not provide any response to domestic violence victims, unless the victim contacts the SNT direct.
- Once the crime or incident is reported the CSU deals with the report.
- SNT monitor crimes on their ward to identify crime patterns to conduct crime prevention initiatives/ reassurance – Domestic violence crimes cannot be targeted in this way.
- Epic performance indicators (agreed MPS performance protocol for SNTs) request visits to Burglary and Robbery victims only.
- With the introduction of the Victims Code of Practice there is a statutory obligation on police to keep the victim informed of significant updates with their allegations. Croydon will be introducing a Victim Focus Desk (late 2006) to provide an improved service to victims of crime and part of their role is to flag reports with Vulnerable/Intimidated victims to the SNT.
- Once the Victim Focus Desk is introduced to Croydon, Vulnerable and intimidated victims of crime can be referred to the SNT.
- It should be noted that the above policy only covers "Crimes" not 'Domestic Incidents'.

### 8. FURTHER ANALYSIS WORK ON POSITIVE ARRESTS

The current arrest rate for DV offences on Croydon Borough is 35.3%, which is slightly under the current Met average of 39%. It should be noted that the rate is taken across ALL domestic incidents including those that have no criminal allegations/offences attached. In order to ensure that positive action is taken at **EVERY** incident reported to police each 'DV' flagged CRIS report is subject to intrusive supervision by the CSU manager and Crime Manager on a daily basis. Any case where there has been no arrest made at the time is reviewed to ensure that proactive arrest enquiries were made at time of recording. Any cases where arrests are outstanding are tasked the following morning for further urgent arrest enquiries to be made. The progress of these enquiries is reviewed at the Daily Tasking Meeting chaired by the Detective Superintendent.

All cases where initial investigating officers fail to take positive action are raised and discussed at the Daily Management Meeting chaired by the Borough Commander. Remedial action is monitored through the minutes of that meeting and individuals are held to account.

### 9. FEEDBACK ON THE VIOLENCE FOCUS DESK AND HOW THIS IS STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL RESPONSE

The Violence Focus Desk is not currently in place within the Borough Intelligence Unit. This has been reviewed as part of the Borough Control Strategy within the National

Intelligence Model. This does not mean that analytical support is not available to officers from the Community Safety Unit. The analytical product referred to within this report will continue to be run a regular intervals in order to inform potential proactive opportunities for future DVEC, Athena or other enforcement campaigns.

#### 10. LONGER-TERM PREVENTION WORK SUCH AS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Croydon's schools involvement programme includes the issue of domestic violence within the "assaults and weapons" presentation regularly provided for secondary school children.

The input is relatively brief and is designed to reassure any child or young person who is suffering within a domestic violence environment (perhaps a child in the class) to go to the schools officer after the lesson, or any other officer, with confidence and in confidence.

Our schools officers also have details of LGBT support groups so that if they are approached by a young person who considers himself or herself to be from this community and in need of support over violent behaviour, we can refer them to an appropriate source of support. Details of these groups were recommended by the Aurora group, which is Croydon's police/LGBT liaison forum, as the LGBT community has general concerns about homophobic bullying in schools. Police and Aurora have also worked on other issues together such as prevention of assaults on transgender people using public toilets (the "which loo" project).

Croydon currently has 40 Disability Liaison officers and 6 LGBT liaison officers. Although domestic violence has not been part of their initial training, it would be a valuable issue to consider as part of their future development.

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Date: 1st September 2006